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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline and briefly discuss a variety of public non-economic effects of higher education--i.e., social benefits and costs that do not involve specifically economic concerns. Appendix A briefly summarizes the data on private non-economic benefits, or the social consequences to the individual of attending college (from which various consequences to the public can, in part, be suggested). Appendix B discusses eight additional areas of possible benefit or disbenefit that are not included in the main body of the memorandum because of ambiguity as to their extent, permanence, and/or value. Appendix C raises four fundamental questions bearing on the question of the social costs and benefits of higher education. The benefits discussed in this memorandum are as follows: (1) Benefits from Liberal Education--citizenship, parenthood, and volunteer services; (2) Benefits from All Higher Education--symbolic benefits, removal from the labor force, and other educational services. Disbenefits from "Credentialism" discussed are: Artificial demand for education; artificial restraints to learning; and artificial social classes. Higher education as a vehicle for attaining equity in our society is seen as having both benefits and disbenefits, with the middle class benefitting most. (Author/DB)

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W O R K I N G D R A F T

PUBLIC NONECONOMIC BENEFITS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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Table of Contents

		Page
A.	Introduction	1
B.	Benefits from Liberal Education	2
	1. Citizenship: Enhancing Democratic Potential	2
	2. Parenthood: Informal Educational Services	5
	3. Promoting Volunteer Services	5
C.	Benefits from All Higher Education	6
	1. Symbolic Benefits	6
	2. Removal from Labor Force	8
	3. Other Educational Services	9
D.	Disbenefits from "Credentialism"	10
E.	Benefits and Disbenefits from Higher Education as a Vehicle for Equity	11
F.	Summary	13
Appendix A:	A Brief Summary of Private Non-economic Benefits	15
Appendix B:	Some Questionable Public Non-economic Benefits and Disbenefits	19
	1. Disdain for Manual Labor	19
	2. Societal Dropouts	20
	3. Overqualified Workers	20
	4. Lower Utilization of Public Services	21
	5. Socialization, Bureaucratization, Juvenilization	22
	6. College as Recreation	23
	7. College as a Marketplace for Marriage and Drugs	23
	8. College as a Political Enclave	24
Appendix C:	Some Fundamental Questions Bearing on Social Costs and Benefits of Higher Education	26
	1. Liberal Education as National Security?	26
	2. Job Market or Learning Market?	28
	3. Who Should be Educated?	29
	4. What Kind of Higher Education?	31

PUBLIC NON-ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A. Introduction

The question regarding the definition and measurement of the public benefits resulting from an investment in undergraduate education is extremely complex and difficult. An earlier Policy Memorandum provided an outline of what a systematic and thorough treatment of this issue would entail, including the problem of distinguishing between public and private costs and benefits. (Policy Memorandum SYR-71-6, "Justifying Federal Educational Expenditures: A Preliminary Analysis of Research Design for USOE Policy Question No. 6," December, 1971.)

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline and briefly discuss a variety of public non-economic effects of higher education--i.e., social benefits and costs that do not involve specifically economic concerns. Appendix A briefly summarizes the data on private non-economic benefits, or the social consequences to the individual of attending college (from which various consequences to the public can, in part, be suggested). Appendix B discusses eight additional areas of possible benefit or disbenefit that are not included in the main body of the memorandum because of ambiguity as to their extent, permanence, and/or value. Appendix C raises four fundamental questions bearing on the question of the social costs and benefits of higher education.

Of the eight areas of benefit and disbenefit discussed in this memorandum, the first three (citizenship, parenthood, volunteer services) are largely a benefit from liberal education only. The public benefits of higher education as a symbol of opportunity, as a means of removal of large

numbers of people from the labor force, and as providing support to other educational services are derived from any form of higher education. "Credentialism," on the whole, is judged as a disbenefit to the public, while college as a vehicle for equity is judged as both beneficial and disbeneficial. Due to the paucity of data, there is no attempt to provide any weighting of these areas, and it is impossible to attempt any quantitative calculations at this point.

At best, the additional questions raised in this memorandum will serve to guide comprehensive research addressed to the question of social costs and benefits, and to avoid many of the pitfalls that such research could encounter.

B. Benefits from Liberal Education

There appear to be three areas of public benefit from liberal education--i.e., broad-based learning in the arts and sciences that develops a critical capacity to understand man, nature, and society, as opposed to narrow training for an occupation or profession. Based on survey findings summarized in Appendix A, it is suggested here that an investment in liberal education results in better citizens, parents, and personnel for volunteer services. But it is impossible at present to indicate the extent of the contribution that is made by education.

B-1. Citizenship. Many of the (presumed) characteristics of the college educated individual are those that would be ascribed to a good democratic citizen: one who is informed, tolerant, rational, amenable to change, and active in community and elections.

Of what value is a good citizen to a democratic society? This fundamental and seemingly naive question is virtually never asked, for it requires laying aside two quite comfortable assumptions: that we do have a practicing

and healthy democracy, and that the majority of the citizenry is capable of informed and responsible democratic participation. Of course, we have a democracy relative to a monarchy, or dictatorship, but it is nevertheless imperfect and will always be so. As recent reforms in civil rights and party nomination procedures have made clear, there are many respects in which the United States has become more democratic and in which still further improvement could be made. And, with the increasing possibilities of a dossier dictatorship or of "friendly fascism"[1] (in the name of "democracy" of course), it is not at all certain that we will remain more or less a democracy. This doubt only becomes apparent when one honestly opens himself to these possibilities, rather than assuming that "it can't happen here."

Nor can one take much satisfaction with the capacity of our citizenry to build a better democracy or support what we already have. To utilize a very simple indicator (that suggests little if any benefit from higher education) only 65% of college graduates could name their current congressman in March 1970, as opposed to 54% of high school graduates and 40% of those with less than a high school diploma.[2] Simple identification, of course, says nothing about ability to assess the performance of one's representative relative to the promises of his electoral challenger. As our society becomes more complex and problem-ridden, it becomes increasingly difficult for citizens--even the educated--to understand their circumstances and to act intelligently, both in the voting booth and in other realms of civic action.[3]

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[1] Arthur R. Miller, The Assault on Privacy: Computers, Data Banks, and Dossiers. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1971. Bertram M. Gross, "Friendly Fascism: A Model for America," Social Policy, November-December 1970.

[2] Gallup Opinion Index, April 1970, p.20.

[3] Max Ways, "Don't We Know Enough to Make Better Public Policies?" Fortune, April 1971. Also see Donald N. Michael, The Unprepared Society (Basic Books, 1970), Victor C. Ferkiss, Technological Man (Braziller, 1969), and Peter F. Drucker, The Age of Discontinuity (Harper & Row, 1969).

To further complicate the matter, add the distortion of politics. Information, and the capacity to handle information, is power. Politicians, in varying degrees, find it beneficial to keep the public ignorant and to utilize the public's ignorance as a means of securing office. Thus the fully responsive citizen is not necessarily of benefit to some politicians, and may even be a threat to their continuance in office. Jack Anderson and Ralph Nader might be considered as contemporary examples.

But if an increasingly complex society is to preserve its democratic forms, while solving the massive problems that it has created, it is necessary to increase the portion of the population that is capable of critical participation.[4] As Alfred North Whitehead observed nearly fifty years ago, "In the conditions of modern life the rule is absolute: the race which does not value trained intelligence is doomed."[5] This rule is applicable today, and will be more so tomorrow.

Thus, if we truly value democracy, there is a major social benefit in educating the citizenry. But how many good citizens are necessary or desirable? And, similar to the difficulties of assessing the monetary value of a human life, what is a good citizen worth? $1,000? $10,000? If we spend $100,000 or more to kill an enemy soldier in Vietnam, is it worth an equal amount to insure a friend of democracy at home? This fundamental question will be further examined in Appendix C.

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[4] Kenneth Keniston and Mark Gerzon, "Human and Social Benefits" in Universal Higher Education: Costs and Benefits. Washington: American Council on Education, 1971, pp.37-62. (Background Papers for the 1971 ACE Annual Meeting to be published in book form in 1972.) The Keniston/Gerzon article has an excellent review of the survey data on individual benefits and contains an extensive discussion of enhanced citizenship as a social benefit to society. Additional benefits and related questions that are discussed in this memorandum, however, are not covered by Keniston and Gerzon.

[5] Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education. New York: Macmillan, 1929; Free Press paperback edition, 1967, p.14.

B-2. Parenthood. As suggested by the data on individual benefits summarized in Appendix A, college graduates are better equipped as informal teachers in the home setting, besides holding developmental, future-oriented, long-range views for their children. Educated parents undoubtedly serve as major influences in the critical pre-school years of their children: they help their children with school work, demand good schools, steer the child toward beneficial out-of-school learning activities, aid in selecting colleges, and insist on relatively high standards. Little wonder, then, that the children of college-educated parents are more successful in school and have a greater tendency to attend college.

In part, the college-educated parent can afford the extra costs of contributing to his child's learning, due to higher economic status; and he may feel compelled to do so due to the pressures of higher social status. But, to an unknown degree, the college-educated parent is a better out-of-school teacher. These out-of-school educational services undoubtedly play an important role in the total learning of children and are therefore of considerable public benefit. However, the private benefit of this generationally downward effect accrues almost solely to the children of the privileged, and therefore serves to reinforce inequities in the society.

B-3. Volunteer Services. It is generally believed that college graduates participate in volunteer services to a greater degree than non-college graduates.[6] And, while at college, students appear to be increasingly participating in volunteer services such as tutoring.[7] Unfortunately,

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[6] Louis Hausman, "Pressures, Benefits, and Options" in Universal Higher Education: Costs and Benefits. Washington: American Council on Education, 1971, p.12.

[7] Elinor Wolf, "Reveille for Volunteers," American Education, November, 1968. During 1965, it was estimated that 22 million persons were engaged in some form of non-religious volunteer work, and during any one week about 7 million persons were so engaged. Almost two million people donated their labor to elementary and secondary schools during the sample week of the survey--a force equal to the number of teachers on a head count basis.

(cont'd on next page)

there are no data as to the amount of volunteer participation by college students and college graduates nor its social and economic efficacy. Voluntary services are undoubtedly a public benefit, but ability and/or desire to participate in them may be primarily due to socio-economic position rather than inspired by any college-sponsored experience. Similar to better parenthood, it is presumed that the quality of volunteer services would be enhanced by liberal education.

C. Benefits from All Higher Education

Regardless of whether the higher education experience is a liberal education or some form of occupational training, there are three areas of public benefit resulting from an investment in any form of higher education.

C-1. Symbolic Benefits. Upward mobility via college attendance is an obvious private benefit for the individual, but college-educated children are also a major private benefit for their families--not so much in economic terms (for it is doubtful that the family investment is fully repaid), but in terms of social status and psychological gratification. To some degree, college-educated children may educate their parents (as college-educated parents clearly do their children) but there is no evidence to prove or disprove this generationally upward effect. Indeed, it might be argued that upward mobility via sending one's children to college avoids the rigors of changing one's own personality and life-style as a result of liberal education.

It is clear, however, that a college education has become "The American

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(U.S. Dept. of Labor, Americans Volunteer. Washington: Manpower/Automation Research, Monograph No. 10, April 1969, p3.) Unfortunately, further data on this hidden labor force appears to be unavailable.

Dream" and putting the kids through college has become a (and often the) major expenditure for families. One engineer spent $53,000 for the education of his three children at "good" schools, fully conscious that he was "buying" his children into a respectable social niche. But this was merely for security; other families utilize college for their children as a form of vicarious upward mobility. As one ex-resident described a working-class neighborhood in Syracuse, N.Y.: "The whole street was that way. If you had a kid that went to college and finished, then you were really in the upper echelon of Rose Avenue. What happened after that didn't matter." And for others, rather than keeping up with the neighbors, or one-upping the Joneses, seeing the children through college is a personal challenge, a mountain to climb, a chance for accomplishment in what might otherwise be a dull and meaningless life. The financial outlays made by American families attest to the power of a college education for its symbolic worth, if not for its substantive values.

One might argue that college as "The American Dream" is of questionable social or public value, because the economic burden can be as much of an onus to some as the experience is an opportunity to others. Nevertheless, college has come to serve as the major avenue of opportunity in our society, the major vehicle for determining social class. To constrict this opportunity, in the face of a trend toward expanding aspirations, would create considerable frustrations among the American people. The opportunity to attend college, to participate in the American dream, can only be expanded--or replaced by an equally accepted substitute.

The sense of opportunity, of open doors to betterment (either directly by going to college or indirectly by sending one's children) provides hope to many. It is not known how deep and widespread this hope lies with the American people, or the degree to which the hope for advancement is leavened with cynicism. But college has come to be a powerful symbol—indeed, some critics see it as a religion. And tampering with the faith of a people is not to be taken lightly.

C-2. Removal from the Labor Force. A major social effect of undergraduate education has nothing to do with what is learned on the campus, or the symbolic value of college attendance. It is simply the result of having 7 million full-time equivalent enrollments kept out of the labor force. If higher education had not doubled over the past decade, there would be an additional 3.5 million people in the labor force. Since young adults tend to have fairly high unemployment rates, we would expect sizeable numbers of these students to be unemployed were they not enrolled in college.

Increasingly, college education may serve the social function of alleviating some surplus labor. Indeed, college attendance serves as an alternative to welfare or as a highly desirable form of welfare. It is of far greater social benefit to have college students improving themselves and their self-image than to have individuals on conventional welfare who become dependent and debilitated by doing so. It is true, of course, that the two populations can only be loosely equated, but middle-level vacancies in the labor force created by college attendance would be filled by other employees, eventually creating slots at the bottom for all but the most thoroughly incompetent. And for many of the young, especially from low-income background, college attendance or welfare are the only choices available.

This condition is likely to become even more apparent in the future. Forecasts in the early 1960's of massive job displacement by automation have proved somewhat premature (or false), but may nevertheless prove to be accurate in the long-term. The alternatives for occupying adult time are leisure activities, social betterment projects, or education. Leisure activities are not without some direct and indirect public costs. Overload of recreation facilities such as national parks can lessen enjoyment and prove dangerous to the natural environment. Sedentary use of leisure time (such as watching television) could create a passive, mind-numbed society. Social betterment projects, such as a community service corps, provide a valuable option to the educational lock-step, but, if instituted on a voluntary basis, may not result in any significant displacement of the labor force.

On the other hand, virtually every long-range forecast of education envisions a high proportion of the population engaged in continuing learning, including intermittent periods on campus. This is seen as necessary and desirable, for individuals and for the society. If we can no longer maintain more than 95% employment in the post-high school population, we may confront a choice of emphasizing a leisure society or a learning society. Such a choice could prove fundamental to the future quality of our lives.

C-3. Other Educational Services. The investment in undergraduate education does not only buy educational services to enrolled students, but also supports a faculty that provides educational services to others in the form of research, direct consultation to industry and government, cultural services (such as artistic performance, public lectures, exhibits), and participation in various community institutions. It can well be argued that much of the research is arcane and addressed only to colleagues and that it is conducted at the expense of teaching enrolled students; that consultation favors certain elites and does not necessarily require an educational institution as a base of operations; that cultural services fail to involve much of the non-campus community; and that faculty participation in the community is relatively limited. But the potential for these extra services is nevertheless available, and, if not fully realized, efforts might be made to enhance their realization. To the degree that these services are realized and that they enhance teaching, there is a positive social benefit.

A disbenefit to supporting services located on a campus is that, in some cases such as Columbia University, the campus utilizes valuable space that might otherwise be used by the community. Otherwise, except for the consumption of building materials and paper, higher education does not waste natural resources, and in most cases enhances human resources.

D. Disbenefits from "Credentialism"

There is little doubt that higher education, through the practice of "credentialism" increasingly serves as the major device for social selection, or determining who will occupy important roles in society. This unintended function is a public benefit to the extent that it replaces more traditional and onorous methods of social selection such as social class, nepotism, and political favoritism. But the variety of disbenefits resulting from "credentialism" is seen as outweighing the benefit mentioned above:

D-1. Artificial Demand for Education. The demand for credentials creates an artificial demand for the services of educating institutions. There are many who attend classes primarily to get a diploma rather than for learning. Even for those who wish to learn, unnecessary dependencies on classrooms and programs are created at a time when independent lifelong learning is increasingly necessary.

D-2. Artificial Restraints to Learning. Even where there is no scarcity of instructional resources or limited job opportunities, enrollment in courses and programs is often restricted by using diplomas as entry passes.

D-3. Artificial Social Classes. There is an immense variation among institutions granting ostensibly similar diplomas, as well as among individuals within an institution who obtain the same diploma. The widespread emphasis on "college graduates" as having unique qualities as a group serves to create an artificial social class.

These problems and others have been explored in greater detail elsewhere.[8] They arise, however, from our valuation of credentials, rather than

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[8] Michael Marien, "Credentialism in our Ignorant Society," Notes on the Future of Education, II, 3, Summer 1971; Michael Marien, "Beyond Credentialism: The Future of Social Selection," Social Policy, September-October, 1971.

from higher education itself. Alternative forms of awarding expertise and valuing college credentials could serve to alleviate these problems. But, at present, additional investment in higher education as is can only serve to aggravate the disbenefits of credentialism.

E. Benefits and Disbenefits from Higher Education as a Vehicle for Equity

The upper class and upper middle class have traditionally benefited from a college education; by "being educated" (that is, by having attended college) one becomes socially distinguished from the "uneducated." As credentials increasingly serve to determine social class, the question of who gets into college is increasingly addressed. And thus there is a trend toward greater proportional representation among social classes in college enrollments, although the goal of equal participation among the classes is far from being reached and, if at all possible, will require decades of effort, given present rates of progress.[9] Nevertheless, attempts to create "equality of opportunity" are proliferating through open enrollment plans and tuition aid. These attempts are laudable, but should not be confused with creating significantly greater equity in the wider society. There is some evidence that the educational process may reduce income inequity. But to what degree and over what period of time is unclear. Consciously or unconsciously, "college as the principal vehicle for equity" creates a smokescreen that avoids the broader issues of distribution of income, assets, and services in our society.

Open doors and help with tuition do not in themselves provide equal opportunity, but simply close the gap of inequity to some degree. The open doors generally belong to community colleges, where the quality of services is inferior; graduated tuition according to family income provides some help,

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[9] Thomas F. Green, "The Dismal Future of Equal Educational Opportunity" in Green (ed.), Educational Planning in Perspective. Guildford, Surrey, England: FUTURES-IPC Press, Fall 1971.

but hardly puts the poor student on an equal footing with the affluent students insofar as resources to see one through college. Liberals benefit from the warm glow of having done something, while low income students do not question their gift horses; consequently, the issue of equity is postponed.

Thus, insofar as who benefits from more higher education, the middle class has clearly come out ahead in recent years. As more degrees are awarded, the private value of the degrees is lessened, and as the middle class gains access to critical skills and knowledge, they can challenge the hegemony of traditional elites in realms where credentialed brainpower matters. Despite well-intentioned efforts to enhance lower class access to higher education, participation is difficult. The interests of the lower class would be far better served by direct redistribution of wealth and probably better served by public expenditure for services that directly benefit the poor. Investment in higher education may therefore be a disbenefit to the poor by making funds for redistribution or more direct services less available. It should be noted, however, that a redistribution of funds to lower income classes would have the predictable result of increasing their demand for access to higher education.

It should also be emphasized that even if full equality of opportunity for formal education existed, there could still be inequity in the wider society equal to or possibly even greater than that which presently exists. The only change would be in the method of selecting elites: amplifying the long-term trend from heredity to achievement, thus creating a more genuine meritocracy. But in a pure meritocracy, as pointed out by Michael Young,[10] the inequities between social classes are aggravated because natural talent among the lower classes no longer exists, and to be poor after having a

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[10] Michael Young, The Rise of the Meritocracy, 1870-2033: An Essay on Education and Equality. London: Thames and Hudson, 1958; Baltimore: Penguin, 1961.

chance to prove oneself is also a condition of knowing that one is inferior in addition to being underprivileged.

F. Summary

There are some additional public non-economic benefits and disbenefits that might warrant addition to this listing (see Appendix B) but additional elaboration could draw attention away from the major areas of social impact that have been discussed.

To some degree, liberal education enhances capacity as a democratic citizen, which could well be seen as an increasingly major public benefit. Liberal education also contributes to effective parenthood--especially as concerns informal education for one's children--and probably enhances the quality of voluntary services.

Regardless of learning outcomes, the symbolic benefit of "College as the American Dream" continues to provide hope for many. Engaging students in campus-based activity keeps a significant number of people out of the labor force, therefore mitigating problems of unemployment and welfare while enhancing human resources. Supporting the education of enrolled students also enables the provision of other educational services that generally benefit elites in government, industry, the community, and academia.

These benefits are to be weighed against the largely negative consequences of "credentialism" whereby artificial demand for education and restraint to learning impede constructive attitudes, and artificial social classes prevent the judging of people in light of their actual qualities.

Higher education is one of the principal vehicles for attaining equity in our society, but the impact is mixed. The middle class clearly benefits,

although higher education may enhance equity among the classes in the long run. In the short run, the attention paid to higher education as a solution deflects attention away from fundamental issues of equity and more direct methods of redistribution.

The assertions on these eight areas of impact are all quite tentative, and it is obvious that considerable research is required in order to attain a firmer understanding of the public non-economic benefits of higher education. And any adequate answer to this question must attempt a comprehensive and impartial assessment of all possible impacts of higher education both as it is and as it could be.

Appendix A. A Brief Summary of Private Noneconomic Benefits

Most of the research on the impacts of higher education has been devoted to the realm of individual or private benefits, which are not necessarily benefits accruing to the larger society. To a considerable degree, the task of summarizing private benefit data has been recently performed for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education by Stephen B. Withey and his colleagues at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research. The findings from this synthesis of survey research are presented in Chart 1 on the following page.

But these findings must be severely qualified, for

1. Circumstances associated with the prior social status of those who attend college may be more important than characteristics acquired during college. For example, entering college freshmen are more open minded and liberal, and less prejudiced and authoritarian, than their non-college attending peers.

2. Circumstances resulting from the greater opportunities and higher status afforded by a diploma (rather than what has been learned during college) may be more influential than characteristics acquired during college. For example, the graduate may be less interested in job security because he has more security, he may be better informed because it is necessary to his job, and he may feel more socially efficacious because he does indeed have some power as a result of higher socio-economic status.

3. Circumstances resulting from the college residential experience may be more influential than the actual instructional experience. For example, one's readiness to express emotions, open-mindedness, and

awareness of interpersonal relationships may derive more from peer-group interaction in dormitories and extra-curricular activities than from classroom interaction.

Chart 1. Characteristics of College Graduates*

College Graduates are Likely to be More...

--Open minded and liberal
--Concerned with aesthetic and cultured values
--Relativistic and non-moralistic
--Integrated, rational, and consistent
--Aware of selves and of interpersonal relationships
--Ready to express emotions
--Interested in the meaningful, interesting, and challenging aspects of an occupation
--Involved in the various resources and services of society
--Church-going and organization-belonging
--Informed and supportive of international involvements, both militaristic and peaceful
--Informed about political issues, business problems, science, and medicine
--Supportive of protest (but not of obstructionist tactics)

College Graduates are Likely to be Less...

--Blatantly prejudiced
--Concerned with material possessions
--Adhering to traditional values and behaviors
--Authoritarian
--Interested in job security

College Graduates tend to...

--Feel more socially efficacious and personally competent
--Have fewer nervous breakdowns and psychological distress (headaches, dizzyness), but more nervousness
--Be better equipped as teachers in the home setting when it comes to helping children with their education
--Read more books and magazines (even general interest magazines such as Reader's Digest, TV Guide, and Parade. The difference is far greater for news magazines, e.g. 23% of college graduates read Time, as opposed to 4% of non-graduates.
--View less television (although time devoted to viewing is still greater than that devoted to all other media combined).
--Affiliate with the Republican party (fewer than half of college graduates reported voting for the Democratic nominees in the last nine presidential elections)
--Vote more (about 90% turnout in presidential elections)

* Source: Stephen B. Withey, A Degree and What Else? A Report Prepared for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1971.

Despite these caveats, there is evidence from a number of freshman year-senior year studies that change does occur while at college (although the causes are no clear) and Withey concludes that:

1. Every year of higher education results in added impact and benefits, e.g., sophomores show more change than freshmen, juniors show more change than sophomores.

2. There is an impact across most institutions and most students.

3. Students who start from a low socioeconomic base appear to change in the same areas, and in the same direction, as their more privileged peers.

4. Vocationally-oriented students show less of these changes than others.

It is also helpful to simply ask alumni and students as to whether their experience was worthwhile, as Pace and colleagues have recently done (Chart 2). However, this data also requires qualification, for such a question is designed to measure belief about benefits, rather than actual benefits. Pace does not ask about negative influences or disbenefits arising from the college experience, nor does he ask whether the individual may feel that even greater progress or benefit might have been experienced under different conditions. And, to be perfectly fair, it could be reasonable to ask non-college persons what benefits they think they derived from not going to college. Far more research is needed, including the assessment of the changes in college-educated and non-college-educated valuations over time. Yet, the need for research on private benefits pales in contrast to the need for research on public benefits, as suggested by this essay.

Despite the many reservations on the private benefit data, one must nevertheless conclude that the individual gains a number of non-economic as well as economic benefits from an undergraduate education.

Chart 2 - Individual Judgments on Benefits from College: 1969 *

Question: "In thinking back to your undergraduate experience in college or university (or to your experience up to now) to what extent do you feel that you were influenced or benefited in each of the following respects?"

	Percent indicating "very much" or "quite a bit" of progress or benefit	
	8400 Alumni (Class of 1950)	Students (Upperclassmen)
Vocabulary, facts	78%	68%
Critical Thinking	73	70
Personal development	66	84
Specialization	65	70
Philosophy, cultures	63	69
Social, economic status	63	60
Communication	63	48
Literature	61	56
Social development	61	75
Individuality	61	75
Tolerance	56	79
Science	55	43
Friendships	53	74
Art, music, drama	43	52
Vocational training	42	40
Citizenship	36	35
Religion	30	35

* Source: C. Robert Pace and Mary Milne, "College Graduates: Highlights from a Nationwide Survey," UCLA Center for the study of Evaluation, Evaluation Comment, 3:2, Nov. 1971. Derived from Fig. 1, p. 5.

Appendix B: Some Questionable Public Non-economic Benefits and Disbenefits

There are a variety of additional public benefits and disbenefits that are frequently mentioned; some of the purported benefits are apparent fictions promulgated by supporters of higher education, while some of the purported disbenefits are fictions in the public mind. A brief analysis of eight such areas suggests considerable ambiguity as to extent of impact, permanence, and/or value, as well as the need for additional clarifying research. Any of these areas, as well as others that have not been considered here, could well qualify as a major realm of benefit or disbenefit; but, at the present time, they warrant classification in a "questionable" category.

1. Disdain for Manual Labor. It can be argued that college attendance creates a white collar mentality, and prevents the college attender from ever considering skilled manual labor at a time when there is still a demand for these servcies. This may have been more pronounced in the past, however, and a recent article in Life (February 11, 1972) entitled "Harvard Grads Go Blue Collar" suggests a possible shift in the valuation of occupations. Moreover, there are many reports of white collar employees trading off their high-salaried corporate positions for the greater satisfactions of independent craftsmanship, proprietorship, or "getting back to the land." The extent of this shift is not known, and its assessment as to "trend" or "fad" depends on one's sympathy to this development. In any event, "disdain for manual labor" can no longer be presumed. The value of this shift is also subject to question. Some might argue that the benefits of a college education are lost if the graduate engages in blue collar work. On the other hand, the benefits may be equally applicable to manual work. For example, one voluntary dropout from a doctoral program in geology is now operating a small auto repair shop in Syracuse because he finds fixing cars preferable to becoming a professional geologist--but he does

not regret his academic experience and finds it valuable in solving auto repair problems.

2. Societal "Dropouts." A related argument to "disdain for manual labor" is that a growing number of college graduates have a disdain for any productive role in the society: that they continue to hang around campuses as perpetual students or non-students--the educational equivalent of the much-advertised "welfare bum"; that they drop out of the mainstream of the society to live on communes; or that they turn to a life of radical disruption that is counterproductive to society. Two years ago, when campus unrest was widespread and publicly visible, it would have been at least safe to argue that a new trend was apparent--although there would still be argument as to the actual numbers involved (1%?, 5%?), the proportion of dropouts considered significant, and the contribution of higher education, if any, to this behavior. There is a further question of valuation. The "educational bum" may not be particularly productive, but he is not necessarily a social liability unless he subsists on welfare, destroys property, negatively influences other students, and so forth. The dropout (or pushout, or graduate) to an alternative life-style, at the least, is not necessarily a liability to society (although his lifestyle may irritate traditional values); at best, the "dropout" may be a social pioneer, experimenting with lifestyles that may become valued in the future. Indeed, rather than draining public coffers for research grants, he could be seen as performing independent social research and development in the public interest. Finally, the political dropout can be seen as a liability, but also as a catalyst to necessary social change.

3. Overqualified Workers. As a result of Ivar Berg's recent book,* it is commonly noted that some college graduates are overqualified for their jobs, with the social effect of job dissatisfaction and even lower performance. Unfortunately, this perspective is purely economic (seeing

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* Ivar Berg, Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery. New York: Praeger, 1970.

no other benefit of education than as a path into the labor force) and it is from an employer's perspective. From the educated employee's perspective, dissatisfaction may not be inherently attached to the job, but to unimaginative superiors who may be threatened by bright and/or educated employees. Such a Gresham's Law is certainly at work in schools, if one is to seriously consider the accounts of a number of ex-teachers. The telephone company discourages any higher education for its operators, for fear that they might get uppity. Furthermore, it has been projected by former HEW Secretary Wilbur Cohen that 12 million employees attended company schools in 1970, while another 6 million were in some formal on-the-job training program.* There are no data whatsoever to suggest the relationship of college attendance and corporate training. Is corporate education provided in place of or in spite of college attendance? If college graduates participate in corporate training programs (other than "learning the ropes") to an equal or greater degree than non-college graduates, it would hardly seem that the labor force is overqualified.

4. Lower Utilization of Public Services. It is widely held that the college graduate, as a good citizen, does not place demands on public services to the degree that the non-college graduate does. As stated by Louis Hausman of the American Council on Education, "College-educated persons make indirect, though no less real, contributions to the economy; they appear less frequently on relief rolls, occupy fewer jail cells; they have fewer auto accidents; are healthier; have a lower absentee rate." And so on.** All of this is undoubtedly true, but the cause of this exemplary civic behavior may stem from higher socio-economic status rather

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*Wilbur J. Cohen, "Education and Learning" in Bertram M. Gross (ed.), Social Goals and Indicators for American Society, The Annals of the American Adademy of Political and Social Science: 373, Sept. 1967, p. 84.

**Louis Hausman, "Pressures, Benefits, and Options" in Universal Higher Education: Costs and Benefits. Washington: American Council on Education, 1971, p.14.

than from the educational services offered by higher education. College graduates are more able to get jobs, so they thus appear less on welfare rolls. They are better able to pay for health services, so they are healthier. They have fewer auto accidents and a lower absentee rate because they have more satisfying jobs and do not have to seek gratification by racing cars and playing hooky. As for occupying jail cells, if all people had equal access to legal services, or if white collar crime was prosecuted as intensely as violent and (blue collar) property crime, then college graduates might exhibit a more representative balance. There would still be unequal representation, however, for college graduates are treated well by society and have more reason to be lawabiding by having more to lose. And thus the argument of lower utilization of public services as a result of learning at college is probably spurious. On the other hand, college graduates use airports, stock exchange regulations, government publications, passports, political favors, tax privileges, publically sponsored continuing education, courts, and law enforcement services. The argument can thus be made that college graduates create a demand for a different set of government services and subsidies.

5. Socialization, Bureaucratization, Juvenilization. Sociologists blandly claim that college performs a socializing function, but it remains problematic as to who is being socialized to what, by whom, to what degree, and how these efforts vary within and between colleges. Reactionaries worry about leftist values, while radicals see college students succumbing to the values of the bureaucratic state. Educational reformers currently claim that college is juvenilizing despite the increasing degree of personal and intellectual freedom that is allowed. Such negative social impacts, although perhaps ideologically inflated as to scope and importance, may nevertheless exist, and it is important to note that all of the surveys of benefits to the individual have failed to ask questions about disbenefits. (Economists of course, have not hesitated to apply their concept of opportunity costs as a negative factor in college attendance, but, being limited

to describing economic factors, they invariably fail to assess both public and private non-economic benefits and disbenefits.)

6. College as Recreation. Some college students see their experience as an exclusive opportunity for fun and games; some non-college youth and adults may also see college as such and wonder why the government should finance a good time for a select few. Again, there is the problem of researchers failing to ask questions that may result in data that is damaging to the interests of higher education. The traditional "fun and games" culture which valued a good time and a "Gentlemen's C" surely existed in the past, and may still exist to a significant degree, despite the widespread impression that students are more serious about their studies.

On the other hand, it might be noted that college football and basketball teams perform a valuable recreational service for the public, while serving as a major path for upward social mobility for those who succeed in the gladiator role. In turn, big-time college sports are often the only link that the public has to higher education. The quantity and quality of college-based public entertainment, however, would probably be subject to little or no influence by any major increase or decrease in college enrollments.

7. College as a Marketplace for Marriage and Drugs. College campuses continue to exist as a meetingplace for the sexes, and to many the primary motivation for sending daughters to college may still be to enhance social position through marriage. The marriage market as a social byproduct of college is of benefit to individuals, but would be poor use of public funding if marriage were the exclusive purpose of enrollment. As long as socially valued learning takes place, other social by-products such as marriage do not matter. Similar to the recreation functions, there are no data to suggest the importance of marriage as a social function of college. Increasingly, attempts to acquire such data could run afoul of charges of sex discrimination.

An entirely different marketplace has recently developed on the college campus for the buying and selling of drugs. This may concern a number of adults who do not use illegal drugs, but it is probable that the younger generation would still buy and sell drugs if they were not in college. In other words, the use of drugs is a phenomenon of the youth culture, and not of schools and colleges--although these institutions may enhance drug use to some degree. In fairness, it should also be pointed out that there has been virtually no concern by the public when college students were socialized into the ways of harmful but legal drugs such as alcohol.

8. College as a Political Enclave. As an increasing proportion of the college age group attends increasingly large campuses, and with the recent lowering of the voting age, the political effect of concentrating groups of the young will become increasingly apparent. Indeed, the 1972 election may for the first time result in several "higher education congressmen" who owe a substantial measure of their support to students and faculty. Moreover, with greater reason for students to get involved, candidates may find campuses to be a prime source of available, energetic and articulate campaign workers--perhaps even superior to traditional precinct organization. This enfranchisement may benefit Democrats and liberals, while serving to disbenefit Republicans and conservatives--if a shift in political values of the college-educated has taken place, contrary to the historical findings presented in Chart 1. However, there are still a wide variety of forecasts of political proclivity and degree of involvement, and the effect of "college as a political enclave," if any, will be far more apparent after November, 1972.

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In summation, a disdain for manual labor may be an undesirable outcome, but values may be rapidly shifting and historical evidence could prove misleading. Higher education may lead to a variety of "social dropouts" but the extent and directions of this outcome, as well as its valuation, is unclear. The impression

that more college education leads to an "overqualified" labor force must be weighed against the argument that the labor force is outmoded in various respects and sorely in need of continuing education. Lower utilization of public services by college graduates appears to be largely related to social position and must be contrasted with the public services that are used to a greater degree by college graduates.

Socialization, bureaucratization, and juvenilization may be positive or negative social outcomes depending on one's values, but in any event there are no data to confirm or disprove these possibilities. Similarly, there are no data to suggest the degree to which some students enjoy college only as recreation, although it is obvious that the public derives substantial benefit from collegiate sports. College still serves as a marketplace for marriage and more recently, drugs, but the mating function is of neutral value to the public interest as long as some learning is also taking place, while the drug market results from the youth culture and not from college campuses. Finally, colleges may begin to serve as significant political enclaves, to the benefit of some politicians and the disbenefit of others--a matter that ideally could be considered as just and democratic but in reality may become a motivation for support or non-support of higher learning.

Appendix C: Some Fundamental Questions Bearing on Social Costs and Benefits of Higher Education

The public benefits and disbenefits that have been outlined here are by no means fully explored. And it is premature to attempt any quantitative calculations. But even if this task of definition and measurement were to be reasonably complete, there still remain several questions that, though generally ignored, nevertheless have a fundamental bearing on the matter of social costs and benefits. Four of these questions will be briefly considered here (although others may also have to be raised):

--Should liberal education be considered as an element of national security?

--Should undergraduate education be limited by the job market or the learning market?

--Who should be educated?

--Should reforms and/or new institutions be encouraged?

1. Liberal Education as National Security?

Returning to the question of the value of good citizenship, it is appropriate to consider the degree to which good citizenship might be valued.

Imagine a man who desires to protect his house. He builds a six-foot electrified chain link fence around it. He acquires three vicious watchdogs. He installs alarm systems and video monitoring devices in every room. Three of the finest lightning rods available adorn the roof. Traps and poisons of all kinds serve to protect against rodents and insects. Security appears to be total, and well worth the inconvenience of caution around the house to keep from tripping alarms or consuming poison, limited access to the yard because of the watchdogs, and a diminished view because of the fence. Unfortunately, a mild earthquake (creating little damage elsewhere)

shakes the foundation of the house and it crumbles. Despite all of the elaborate security precautions, the basic structure of the house has been neglected as a result of an incomplete view of the system.

Perhaps this parable is oversimplified. But, at least in some respects, we approach matters of national security in the same manner. We spend $75 billion annually for national defense against external threats, of which about $5 billion is spent for military intelligence. Additional billions are spent to protect against internal subversion of the "armed overthrow" variety. (The figures are necessarily vague, but the point nevertheless is roughly expressed here.) But what is it that we are protecting--a national entity, however construed, or a democracy as envisioned by our founding fathers?

In the Budget of the United States Government, the functional category of "National Defense" involves activities of the Department of Defense and the Atomic Energy Commission. Consciously or unconsciously, the concepts of defense and national security have been defined in terms of warring with other nations and therefore of guarding against external threats. Human and natural resources, the residual categories in our budget, are seldom if ever viewed in terms of national security. But threats to our environment could be seen as grave matters of national security, and the capacity of our citizens to sustain a democratic form of governance could also be viewed on the same agenda.

Democratic control in a complex and dynamic society requires informed and thoughtful citizens. We spend $5 billion for military intelligence, but we have virtually no understanding of the capacity of our citizens to deal with the awesome problems of the 1970's or to choose leaders who can deal with them. Nor do we understand how this capacity, if it is desired, can best be developed. Our ignorance in these matters of education and learning stems from a lack of deep consideration of the value to be placed on democracy.

If democratic participation is a fundamental value to our nation--to be preserved at all costs--then that which contributes to strengthening it would be considered as a matter of national security. Higher education contributes to thoughtful citizens and would therefore be considered in a new light. But this also raises the question as to why good citizens should be developed at the undergraduate level--why can't we expect this outcome from secondary schools?

The value placed on the good citizen--a matter of "national security" vs. "a merely worthwhile concern"--determines the value that we place on liberal education. In turn, this value could be influential in answering other fundamental questions such as who learns, for what purposes, how, where, and when.

2. Job Market or Learning Market?

In recent decades, higher education has been valued almost solely for its economic benefits to the individual and society. In the spirit of industrial society thinking, higher education has been linked to the job market and justified in economic terms. By doing so, the ideal capacity of the system is defined by the capacity of the market for college graduates,* and education becomes a matter of body-counting on the input side and diploma-counting on the output side. But this diploma and credit system also serves as a means of controlling the distribution of knowledge--who learns what--and ultimately of job markets both inside and outside of academia.

But the non-economic social benefits of an undergraduate education may come to be valued to some degree (they are virtually ignored in present

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* Laurence B. DeWitt and A. Dale Tussing, The Supply and Demand for Graduates of Higher Education: 1970 to 1980. Syracuse: Educational Policy Research Center, RR-8, December 1971.

calculations*), perhaps even to an equal or greater degree than the economic benefits. When this takes place, there will be a shift to a consideration of the learning market: those among the post-high school population who are willing and able to learn anything that is also of social benefit. Rather than a sub-system dependent on the economy, higher education could become a "free enterprise" responsive to the learning demands of the public. There is virtually no information to suggest what this learning market might be, but if higher education were conducted as a business enterprise, there would surely be ample market research to support development of product lines or programs of study. Indeed, one might ask whether it is at all possible to conceive of higher education as responsive to a learning market, and whether the consequences of doing so would be of benefit or disbenefit to both the economic and non-economic functions of higher learning.

If citizenship and parenthood are valued ends of higher learning, and if there is no limit to the desired number of good citizens and good parents, and if the number of people capable of a liberal education greatly exceeds the number that are presently exposed, then the "learning market" concept requires exploration. However, if these premises cannot be accepted, there will be little incentive to go beyond the job market approach to higher learning.

3. Who Should be Educated?

In contrast to the first two questions, which are rare if not unique, the question of "who should be educated?" is rather common. Unfortunately, the usual framework for providing answers has led to a limited response, i.e., we have confined our answers to choosing among age groups, while ignoring choice between age groups.

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* Ivar Berg, Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery. New York: Praeger, 1970.

This is not to demean the issues of choosing among age groups, for there are important social consequences in doing so. Whereas the choice between sexes has been an issue in the past, this problem appears to be on the way to resolution by outlawing any sex bias. Sex equality in education will ultimately result in equal employment and new family relationships, with a greater emphasis on human similarities rather than traditional sex role differentiation. Eradicating discrimination by the shape of one's skin is an important step toward eradicating racial and ethnic discrimination. But the problem of choosing between the advantaged and disadvantaged will continue, however, and will doubtlessly never be resolved. However, there can be fresh approaches to viewing the problem, i.e., if social costs and benefits were ever to be fully considered, it would probably be found that an investment in a disadvantaged student would have a greater payoff to society through lower utilization of other public services. The problem is in getting liberals to think about costs, while getting conservatives to think differently about costs, changing their "meat-ax approach" to a social investment approach.

Of equal or even greater importance to considering who should be educated is the matter of choosing between age groups. It has been traditionally assumed that higher education is for youth (the 18-21 year old "college age group"), and forecasts of enrollment are based solely on the body count of high school graduates. Yet, even in 1968 one-third of all undergraduates were over 21 years of age, and 17% were 25 and over. Moreover, virtually every trend statement, forecast or prescription for higher learning declares (1) that the age-graded lockstep is bad and that young people will have or should have "real world experience" before starting or completing college, and (2) that lifelong learning is increasingly necessary, such that sustained periods of learning should be interspersed throughout one's productive years. The two trends are complementary, and for this reason alone support of adult over youth participation in higher learning could prove to be a wiser social investment. But it could also be argued that adults are better prepared to appreciate and benefit from a liberal arts experience, and that our society is sorely in need of greater interchange between the generations.

4. What Kind of Higher Education?

If higher education can be shown to be of benefit to society, then it should be supported--thus goes the argument of higher education's two most prominent interest groups, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education and the American Council on Education. Yet, if one takes the extensive literature of reforming education seriously,* the proposed reforms are all in the direction of improving that learning which could be beneficial to society. To the degree that this learning is valued (i.e., learning toward the ends of citizenship and parenthood) then the government might insist on getting a greater return on its investment by stimulating desirable reforms and/or encouraging new institutions. Why get one unit of social good when five units might be obtained at the same cost? Such concern about cost-effectiveness will only be displayed, however, when the value of desired learning outcomes becomes understood and explicit, and outweighs the cost of offending established interests.

If higher learning is increasingly seen as an element of national security, if the learning market is substituted for the job market, and/or if adult learners are given new consideration along with young learners, then there will be a strong impetus to encourage new institutions to satisfy new learning needs for new groups of learners. Proposals, plans, and nascent programs for external degree programs, credit by outside examination, open universities, universities-without-walls, and other forms of "space-free/time-free higher learning"** suggest the new institutions that might be developed in the 1970's.

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* Michael Marien, Alternative Futures for Learning: An Annotated Bibliography of Trends, Forecasts, and Proposals. Syracuse: Educational Policy Research Center, 1971. Especially see items 370-535 and 883-910.

** Michael Marien, "Space-Free/Time-Free Higher Learning: New Programs, New Institutions, and New Questions," Notes on the Future of Education, III:1, Winter 1972. A longer report will be available in April 1972.

On the other hand, education may not be seen as national security or anything approaching it in importance, the job market may continue to control higher learning, the young and the advantaged may continue to receive priority, and higher education in its present form may prove to be the best arrangement for satisfying social needs. These are the unquestioned assumptions of the present. It is doubtful that they would survive a rigorous investigation of the four questions outlined here.

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